

**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE  
48TH DISTRICT  
OSWEGO, JEFFERSON, ST. LAWRENCE COUNTIES**

**DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER  
FOR SENATE/ASSEMBLY RELATIONS**

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TRANSPORTATION

July 25, 2017

Commissioner MaryEllen Elia  
Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York  
State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Commissioner Elia:

I am writing regarding reports of errors on the June 16, 2017 Regents Examination in Geometry.

As a mother and a grandmother, I know how important it is to ensure our students receive a quality education. Testing to measure student success is part of that effort, however, as you are aware, countless people have raised concerns in recent years that the state's over-reliance on standardized testing adds to pressure on students to succeed, as well as on teachers who have expressed that they feel they lose valuable classroom time to "teaching to the test."

If anything, the long and heated debate over standardized testing has highlighted the need to put extra effort into ensuring that tests are fair. It has been widely reported that the June 16, 2017 Regents Examination in Geometry contained errors, where more than one answer was acceptable for multiple questions. A faulty exam—such as this one—could have a significant impact on student success, potentially jeopardizing their chances of obtaining a Regents Diploma, graduating, obtaining employment or attending the college of their choice. In addition, an inaccurate exam could also reflect poorly on educators.

**REPLY TO:**  **ALBANY OFFICE:** ROOM 412 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247 (518) 455-3438  
 **JEFFERSON COUNTY OFFICE:** 317 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM 418, WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601 (315) 782-3418  
 **OSWEGO COUNTY OFFICE:** 46 EAST BRIDGE STREET, FIRST FLOOR, OSWEGO, NEW YORK 13126 (315) 342-2057  
 **ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY OFFICE:** 330 FORD STREET, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK 13669 (315) 393-3024

**E-MAIL:** RITCHIE@NYSenate.GOV

**WEBSITE:** RITCHIE.NYSenate.GOV



I was deeply concerned upon hearing the State Education Department would not rescore the exams which contained errors, even though education officials had acknowledged the mistake. It is my belief that every student should have the opportunity to be tested fairly with exams that contain accurate course material.

I respectfully request that you reconsider your decision to rescore the Regents Examination in Geometry that contained errors. Students and teachers across the state—including those I represent throughout Central and Northern New York—deserve better. These correctable mistakes need to be addressed and not ignored out of hubris. It's our job to work together to ensure that they receive a sound education that prepares them for the future. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty Ritchie". The signature is stylized with large, overlapping loops.

Patty Ritchie  
State Senator

cc: Senator Carl Marcellino, Chair, Senate Education Committee  
Regent Beverly L. Ouderkirk (4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District)  
Regent Elizabeth S. Hakanson (5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District)